I am a resident of Kanawha County, West Virginia. For the last two summers I have been employed in Sequoia National Park as a fire control aid and later as a park ranger. I have therefore become very familiar with Mineral King. Mineral King is an area of land protruding deeply into the southern half of Sequoia National Park and is under Forest Service Jurisdiction. Early in this century the inclusion of Mineral King in Sequoia National Park was proposed but abandoned on the basis that too much land was in privat hands. Also some people felt that the small amount of early mining had made the area below park standards. Congress however, realizing the importance of Mineral King to the safety and well being of the Park, declared it a wild life refuge. Over the years it became apparent that Mineral King under nonpark status was literaly a sword thrust into the side of Sequoia National Park. It was impossible for the congressmen who gave its wildlife protection to forsee that its geography might also someday be destroyed.

Today we are faced with the prospect of Mineral King becoming one of the largest ski centers of the world. Walt Disney Productions has been given the exclusive right to develope within two years a master plan for Mineral King. Extensive surveying is well underway for ski lifts and a high speed all weather mountain highway to run from Three Rivers through the Park to Mineral King. The Park Service has even aided in these surveys by denuding areas inside the park for construction of survey heliports.

The effect of such a development on Mineral King is beyond comprehension to those who know the area. What is now a romantic and still natural area in the Sierra Nevada will become in winter a super sophisticted haven for fashion plates and in the summer tourist season, an incomparable cash register.

Aside from Mineral King itself, consider the impact this will have on Sequoia National Park. Mineral King is at present the jumping off point for much of the travel into the back country of Sequoia, and the present flow of people is already exerting a destructive influence. This is well illustrated by the many gunny sacks of squashed tin cans that I collected and the many limbs chopped off the few existent trees in the Columbine Lake area. It should be born in mind that

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to reach the back country at present requires going over passes nearly 5,000 feet higher than the floor of Mineral King, and it is this barrier that keeps the present flood of visitors at a tolerable level. What will happen when the Disney ski lifts remove this last obstacle between those people with only a passing interest in nature and the remaining wilderness of Sequoia National Park.

Prominent conservation groups have tried to persaude the Forest Service to hold public hearings so that the Forest Servic, Park Service, Walt Disney Poductions, the inhabitants of the Kaweah River area, and the general public could present their views on the proposal. The Forest Service, not being legally required to hold a hearing and most likely taking their cue from the Bureau of Land Management's Grand Canyon debacle, declined to do so. Americans who are concerned with what is happen-happening to our once proud heritage are left with no choice other than to ask for congressional help. It is for these reasons that I most sincerely plead for a very short appointment with you sometime between January 21 and 30. Thank you.

Very truly yours

Bruton R. Peterson

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